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Committee on Information

Twenty-fifth session

28 April-9 May 2003

Agenda item 11

Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee
to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session

Draft report**Contents**

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established under Assembly resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In section I, paragraph 2, of its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

“(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;

“(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;

“(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly”;

and requested the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group,¹ reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182 and decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67. The Committee on Information agreed, at its organizational session in 1980, that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms of office.

3. At its thirty-sixth to fifty-first sessions (see resolutions 36/149 B, 37/94 B, 38/82 B, 39/98 A, 40/164 A, 41/68 A, 42/162 A and B, 43/60 A and B, 44/50, 45/76 A and B, 46/73 B, 47/73 B, 48/44 B, 49/38 B, 50/31 B and 51/138 B), the General Assembly again expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the reports of the Committee² and its recommendations and reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in its resolution 34/182. At its fifty-second session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee³ and adopted consensus resolutions 52/70 A and B of 10 December 1997. At its fifty-third session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁴ and adopted consensus resolutions 53/59 A and B of 3 December 1998. At its fifty-fourth session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁵ and adopted consensus resolutions 54/82 A and B of 6 December 1999. At its fifty-fifth session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁶ and adopted consensus resolutions 55/136 A and B of 8 December 2000. At its fifty-sixth session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁷ and adopted consensus

resolutions 56/64 A of 10 December 2001 and 56/64 B of 24 December 2001. At its fifty-seventh session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee⁸ and adopted consensus resolutions 57/130 A and B of 11 December 2002.

4. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly appointed two new members of the Committee, namely, China and Mexico; at its forty-first session, the Assembly appointed Malta as a new member of the Committee; at its forty-third session, the Assembly appointed Hungary, Ireland and Zimbabwe as new members of the Committee; and at its forty-fourth session, the Assembly appointed Nepal as a new member.

5. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee on Information, to increase the membership of the Committee from 74 to 78 and appointed Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay as members. The Assembly also decided to appoint the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic as a member of the Committee, with immediate effect, to fill the vacancy left by the German Democratic Republic.

6. At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 78 to 79, and appointed Burkina Faso as a member.

7. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 79 to 81, and appointed the Republic of Korea and Senegal as members.

8. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 81 to 83, and appointed Gabon and Israel as members.

9. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 83 to 88, and appointed Belize, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Kazakhstan and South Africa as members.

10. At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 88 to 89, and appointed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a member.

11. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 89 to 90, and appointed Georgia as a member.

12. At its fifty-third session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 90 to 93, and appointed Angola, the Republic of Moldova and Solomon Islands as members.

13. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 93 to 95, and appointed Liberia and Mozambique as members of the Committee.

14. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 95 to 97, and appointed Armenia and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as members of the Committee. Furthermore, the admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to membership in the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/12 of 1 November 2000, terminated the membership of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in all organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations, including the Committee on Information.

15. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 96 to 98, and appointed Azerbaijan and Monaco as members.

16. At its fifty-seventh session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 98 to 99, and appointed Saudi Arabia as a member.

17. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria	Denmark
Angola	Ecuador
Argentina	Egypt
Armenia	El Salvador
Azerbaijan	Ethiopia
Bangladesh	Finland
Belarus	France
Belgium	Gabon
Belize	Georgia
Benin	Germany
Brazil	Ghana
Bulgaria	Greece
Burkina Faso	Guatemala
Burundi	Guinea
Chile	Guyana
China	Hungary
Colombia	India
Congo	Indonesia
Costa Rica	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Côte d'Ivoire	Ireland
Croatia	Israel
Cuba	Italy
Cyprus	Jamaica
Czech Republic	Japan
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Jordan
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kazakhstan

Kenya
 Lebanon
 Liberia
 Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
 Malta
 Mexico
 Monaco
 Mongolia
 Morocco
 Mozambique
 Nepal
 Netherlands
 Niger
 Nigeria
 Pakistan
 Peru
 Philippines
 Poland
 Portugal
 Republic of Korea
 Republic of Moldova
 Romania
 Russian Federation
 Saudi Arabia

Senegal
 Singapore
 Slovakia
 Solomon Islands
 Somalia
 South Africa
 Spain
 Sri Lanka
 Sudan
 Syrian Arab Republic
 Togo
 Trinidad and Tobago
 Tunisia
 Turkey
 Ukraine
 United Kingdom of Great
 Britain and Northern Ireland
 United Republic of Tanzania
 United States of America
 Uruguay
 Venezuela
 Viet Nam
 Yemen
 Zimbabwe

II. Organizational questions

A. Opening of the session

18. The organizational meeting of the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on Information was held on 28 April 2003 at United Nations Headquarters. The session was opened by the Chairman of the Committee, Milos Alcalay (Venezuela).

B. Election of officers

19. In accordance with the principle of geographical rotation, the Committee held elections for a new Bureau for a two-year term. Upon his nomination by the representative of the Republic of Korea, Istekhar Ahmed Chowdhury (Bangladesh) was elected Chairman by acclamation. Upon their nomination by the representatives of Nigeria, Germany and Croatia, respectively, Larbi Djacta (Algeria), Sebastião Filipe Coelho Ferreira (Portugal) and Marius Ioan Dragolea (Romania) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation. Upon her nomination by the representative of Belize, Janice Miller (Jamaica) was elected Rapporteur, also by acclamation. The officers of the Committee on Information for the period 2003-2004 are thus as follows:

Chairman:

Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

Vice-Chairmen:

Larbi Djacta (Algeria)

Sebastião Filipe Coelho Ferreira (Portugal)

Marius Ioan Dragolea (Romania)

Rapporteur:

Janice Miller (Jamaica)

C. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

20. At its organizational meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda and programme of work (A/AC.198/2003/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
4. Statement by the Chairman.
5. Admission of new members.
6. Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.
7. General debate.
8. Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General.
9. Commemoration of World Press Freedom Day.
10. Open-ended working group of the Committee on Information.
11. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

21. The Committee held the substantive meetings of its twenty-fifth session at United Nations Headquarters from 28 April to 9 May 2003.

22. For its consideration of agenda item 8, the Committee had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on:

(a) Reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications (A/AC.198/2003/2);

(b) Programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/2003/3);

(c) Implementation of the pilot project on the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations (A/AC.198/2003/4);

(d) Modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries (A/AC.198/2003/5);

(e) Activities of the United Nations Communications Group in 2002 (A/AC.198/2003/6);

(f) Review of the structure and operations of United Nations information centres (A/57/747).

D. Observers

23. The following Member States took part in the session as observers: Australia, Canada, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, the Dominican Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Paraguay, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Switzerland and Tajikistan. The Holy See also participated as an observer.

24. Representatives of the following specialized agencies also participated as observers: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization. The International Organization of la Francophonie also participated as an observer.

E. Commemoration of World Press Freedom Day

25. On 2 May, the Committee observed World Press Freedom Day 2003 with an event on the media and armed conflict, organized by the Department of Public Information. The Deputy Secretary-General opened the meeting, which was also addressed by the Chairman of the Committee on Information, the Assistant Director-General of UNESCO and the President of the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA). A number of distinguished print and broadcast journalists took part in a panel discussion on the theme "The media and armed conflict". The speakers focused on the role of world media in their coverage of armed conflicts, including conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. Special attention was paid to the emerging policies and best practices that ensure responsible coverage while encouraging the widest press freedom. The event was moderated by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

Notes

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/35/21), annex, sect. V.

² Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21); *ibid.*, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 and corrigendum (A/37/21 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 and corrigenda (A/38/21 and Corr.1 and 2); *ibid.*, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/39/21); *ibid.*, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/40/21); *ibid.*, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/41/21); *ibid.*, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/42/21); *ibid.*, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/43/21); *ibid.*, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/44/21); *ibid.*, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/45/21); *ibid.*, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/46/21); *ibid.*, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/47/21); *ibid.*, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/48/21); *ibid.*, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/49/21); *ibid.*, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/50/21); and *ibid.*, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/51/21).

³ Ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/52/21/Rev.1).

⁴ Ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/53/21/Rev.1).

⁵ Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21* and addendum (A/54/21 and Add.1).

⁶ Ibid., *Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/55/21).

⁷ Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21* and addendum (A/56/21 and Add.1).

⁸ Ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/57/21).

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Twenty-fifth session

28 April-9 May 2003

Agenda items 7 and 8

General debate**Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General****Draft report****Chapter III
General debate**

1. Statements in the general debate were made by the following States members of the Committee on Information: Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil (on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries), Burkina Faso, China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Greece (on behalf of the European Union), India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jamaica (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Venezuela and Yemen. The session was also addressed by two observers: Canada (on behalf of Canada and Australia) and Switzerland. The general debate was preceded by statements made by the Chairman of the Committee (see annex I) and the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Department of Public Information (see annex II).

2. In taking up the substantive questions before the Committee, several speakers said that they attached great importance to the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day, which this year would be observed at United Nations Headquarters on 2 May. One delegation, speaking on behalf of a large group, regretted that freedom of the press did not exist in many countries. Freedom of opinion and expression was a right accepted worldwide and enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He strongly condemned the use of violence to hinder the work of journalists and attempts to control the media by distorting or suppressing information.

3. Another speaker, stressing the importance of World Press Freedom Day, said that there was a need to consider the role that the United Nations could play in



opening up closed societies and in promoting access to impartial and unregulated information. He hoped that in the future, people throughout the world would be able to look to the information resources of the United Nations as a reliable source, especially when their own Governments denied them the opportunity of free access to information. Another speaker, expressing concern at the lack of balance in the way news was presented, hoped that the United Nations would have a wide impact in assisting national media organizations in providing accuracy and balance in the dissemination of news and information. The media message of the United Nations, noted another speaker, should take into account the cultural distortions seen in some public media campaigns. Such distortions could threaten international peace and security by creating tensions among cultures and civilizations. The establishment of an equitable information and communications order should be a primary objective of international public information activities. Such an information and communications order could contribute to the democratization of international society and the creation of favourable conditions for the maintenance of international peace and security, asserted another speaker.

4. Most speakers emphasized the central role of the United Nations, and of the Department of Public Information as its public voice. One delegation, speaking on behalf of a large group, noted that since the crisis in Iraq, world opinion had been characterized by deep concern and sadness. At such a difficult time, the United Nations must persevere and reflect the diversity and cultural integrity of civilizations. The United Nations must bring together that most important "human wealth" and orient it towards peace and life, and, to the extent possible, put an end to war and suffering. He underlined that it was very important for the Organization to be highly visible and to adapt itself to meet the new challenges. In that process of revitalization and adaptation, he said, the Department of Public Information had been called upon to play a significant and dynamic role, for it was the Department that had helped to create the international image of the United Nations, explain its role and show the impact of its actions on international relations.

5. Another speaker, expressing his firm belief in the central role of the United Nations in today's world, underlined the importance of a strong Department of Public Information as the "voice of the Organization". Given the situation prevailing in the world today, he noted, the Department should intensify its campaign to promote the purposes and principles of the United Nations and multilateralism. These were times that called for greater efforts to inform the world of the broader dimensions of the work of the United Nations, said another speaker.

6. Several speakers referred to the growing digital divide between developed and developing countries and called for greater efforts by the Department to close that gap. Paradoxically, while the world was becoming smaller, the digital divide was growing, one delegation commented. Under such circumstances, he said, the Department of Public Information must ensure that all countries had equal access to the benefits of information technologies.

7. One delegation noted that many developing countries lacked the necessary infrastructure and resources to benefit from the rapid advance of information and communication technologies. Until the ever-increasing digital divide was addressed effectively, radio broadcasting remained the most cost-effective and universal means of communications in many developing countries, he said. Another speaker, emphasizing the need to rely on traditional means of communication, noted that

since the need for information was most critically felt in the developing world, which did not have many options at its disposal, the United Nations must make a special effort to reach out to target audiences there. Another speaker, referring to the challenges many developing countries faced, noted that the media in developing countries were lagging behind, not because of a lack of political will, but because of the lack of resources to build up the information infrastructure.

8. Several speakers noted that the World Summit on the Information Society, the first phase of which would take place in Geneva in December 2003 and the second phase in Tunis in 2005, provided a good opportunity to make serious efforts to close the current digital gap. The growing disparity between countries could become worse if efforts were not made to take advantage of technological advances, one speaker said. In that regard, the World Summit should bring about a consensus to share technology in accordance with the spirit of the Millennium Declaration, he noted.

9. Some delegations felt that, given the challenging nature of the times, the Committee on Information had a key role to play in reversing the growing polarization between different cultures and religions. As one speaker noted, the current negative trends were bound to affect the harmony and homogeneity desired by all. He emphasized that the Committee on Information had the mandate to promote the paramount goals of the United Nations and to create better understanding and greater good will among the nations of the world by building bridges between various societies, cultures, religions and regions. One delegation, expressing support for the Secretary-General's vision and proposals for reorientation of the United Nations activities in the field of public information, argued for reaffirming the key role of the Committee on Information in guiding the process of restructuring and repositioning the Department of Public Information. Another delegation called for a review of the role of the Committee on Information, especially in the wake of recent developments in the world. The Committee should abandon its "dry review" of the work of the Secretariat, one speaker said, and become more involved in the promotion of sources of information. In recent months, the world had witnessed great distortions in the press. The Committee should consider that issue and work closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to improve the access of developing countries to sources of information, he said.

10. The new mission statement of the Department of Public Information was welcomed by most delegations. The goals and purposes of the Department had now been better formulated and the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Department had been enhanced, noted one speaker. In welcoming the new direction adopted by the Department, many speakers felt that the new operating model and organizational structure introduced under the second phase of the Secretary-General's reform process would provide the Department with renewed focus and vigour. One speaker, speaking on behalf of a large group, felt that the new strategic directions taken by the Department provided it with an extraordinary opportunity to further rationalize and optimize its activities, maximize the use of its resources and enhance its political visibility and impact. Another speaker, pledging his delegation's support for the current efforts, noted that the reorientation process undertaken by the Department was both difficult and complex and could not be solved with a single step. The reform process was yielding practical results and

providing new opportunities to publicize the role of the Organization, said another speaker.

11. Another delegation, welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on reorientation, felt that the Department had made every effort to reorient its activities. Reform, he noted, was a process, not an event. Keeping this in mind, the Department should continuously adapt itself to meet new challenges. The new divisions established as part of the Department's reorientation, one speaker noted, might provide a way to disseminate the culture of peace and strengthen mutual respect among cultures and civilizations.

12. One speaker, speaking on behalf of a large group, cautioned that, while the progressive restructuring of the Department had been noted, the process should not be conducted at the expense of the programmes related to the priority developmental issues, such as conflict prevention, poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS, dialogue among civilizations and cultures, sustainable development, the battle against international terrorism and the needs of Africa. One delegation, noting that not all areas it considered important had been listed, asked the Department to include in its list of priorities such areas as education, culture, the fight against drugs and organized crime, gender equality, gender perspective and greater emphasis on the need to promote tolerance and non-discrimination. Another speaker, on behalf of a large group, noted appreciatively the Department's resolve to be guided by the priority areas identified by the Millennium Declaration, as well as the World Summit on the Information Society and the International Year of Freshwater 2003. He hoped that similar attention would be paid to the Barbados +10 international meeting, to be held in Mauritius in 2004. One delegation noted that the basic message of the Department included seven goals but that it disregarded the one relating to international cooperation and transfer of technology and transparency in international trade. That goal was crucial if necessary resources for the other seven were to be mobilized. He cautioned that if the Department failed to raise global awareness of the need to ensure the necessary human, technical and financial resources to attain the Millennium Development Goals, the current negative trend of diminishing development assistance would continue.

13. One speaker noted that the communications goals of the Department had been better defined and cooperation between the Department and other Secretariat departments strengthened with the creation of the Strategic Communications Division, which would be responsible for developing communications strategies to promote the work of the United Nations on priority issues. Another delegation, commending the Department for implementing its new organizational structure, especially noted the designation of focal points to work with substantive departments to identify target audiences and to develop information programmes and media strategies for priority issues. The integration of the network of information centres into the Strategic Communications Division was essential for coordinating and streamlining the Organization's information activities, said one delegate. Another speaker, reaffirming his delegation's support for closer coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, underlined the importance of adopting a more proactive and professional approach in relations between the two Departments in order to successfully achieve the mandate of peacekeeping operations. He asked the Department of Public Information to apprise Member States of the progress made so far in respect of modalities of cooperation and relevant structural rearrangements,

and its future plans for increased coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Another speaker, recalling that the General Assembly had declared 29 May the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, welcomed the Department's plan to commemorate the Day for the first time this year, which would be the fifty-fifth year of United Nations peacekeeping.

14. The question of the regionalization of United Nations information centres was addressed by several speakers. Some of them noted with appreciation the Secretary-General's proposal to rationalize and consolidate the information centres located in Western Europe into a hub and welcomed the fact that this would achieve a better distribution of resources to information centres in developing countries and lead to the redeployment of resources to other high-priority activities, such as advancing multilingualism on the United Nations web site and the systematic evaluation of the impact of major products and services. One speaker, on behalf of a large group, stressed the importance of the information centres for the developing countries, especially the least developed countries, as valuable sources of information and means of communication and interaction with the host countries. Another speaker, on behalf of another large group, reiterated his group's belief that the establishment of such regional hubs should take place on a case-by-case basis and should be sensitive to the unique needs and interests of the region involved. One speaker, also welcoming the Secretary-General's proposal, asked the Department to gradually apply the hub approach to other regions, invariably in consultation with the Member States concerned.

15. One delegate, disagreeing with the proposal for regional hubs, argued that the critically important activities and functions of an information centre could not be performed through a "remote control" method from a regional hub. The population in European countries would need to be informed of the role, purpose and functions of the United Nations as candidly and effectively as those in Asian and African countries, he argued. It would not be prudent to undertake such a reorganization and restructuring at this important time, he said, and he asked the Department to review the proposal. Another speaker, who described the proposal for regionalization as "not a good idea", told the Committee that, for countries in Latin America geographical distances and transportation costs made it unfeasible for a certain information centre to have clients beyond the borders of the host country. One delegation suggested that the regional hub in Western Europe should be located in Geneva. One delegation, stating that the closure of nine information centres in Western Europe could create some confusion, asked for clarification on the future of the information office at UNESCO in Paris. Another delegation, calling for greater contributions from host Governments in support of information centres, proposed to amend the "Guidelines and criteria for the reorganization of United Nations information centres" so that the overall support of a host Government was properly reflected.

16. Several speakers reviewed the performance of individual information centres. One speaker described the role of the information centre in Ouagadougou as "irreplaceable", and suggested that, given the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire since 2002, it had a strategic position in terms of public information and initiatives to restore peace and handle related humanitarian issues. The information centre in Dhaka was praised by a speaker for creating a very good web site in the local language, catering to the information requirements of some 250 million people in and outside the country. The role of the information centre in Tokyo was described as crucial by one

delegate, who praised its web site, publications and events as valuable sources of information about the United Nations for the Japanese people. Delegations also praised the positive role played by information centres in Sana'a, Moscow, Mexico City and Buenos Aires. The information component of the United Nations Office in Minsk was also commended for its performance. One delegation, arguing for development of web pages as the "field voice" of a given locality in the applicable language, suggested that a web page of the information centre in Jakarta in Bahasa Indonesia "would be most suitable and cost-effective". An observer of the Committee expressed the interest of his Government in strengthening the United Nations Office at Geneva, not only as a world centre, but also as an information centre. However, one speaker regretted that the web site of the information centre in Lagos was not functional and contained little information about the United Nations. Another delegation proposed that national information officers at United Nations information centres be allowed to serve as heads of the centres, not only as a cost-cutting measure, but also to ensure effective communication with the people in a language they understood.

17. Several speakers urged that greater attention be paid to the needs of the African continent. One speaker, referring to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, asked the Department, through its new Africa Section, to use the New Partnership programme as the platform for reaching out to the intended audiences and mobilizing international support for its implementation. Similarly, another speaker, noting the core messages of the Department, affirmed that this was consistent with the objectives of the New Partnership and pledged his delegation's support in the realization of these objectives.

18. Many delegations considered the Department's web site, managed by the News and Media Division, to be a real success story. One speaker reiterated his delegation's view that the performance of the Department's web site team was a textbook example of what could be accomplished using existing resources, when dedicated professionals applied the knowledge, commitment, flexibility and creativity necessary to get the job done. The speaker especially commended the web site team for its live webcasting of United Nations meetings and its timely posting of items on its News Centre page. Another speaker, describing the web site as a very cost-effective medium for disseminating information about the activities of the Organization, noted that it had been of immeasurable benefit to all. One delegation, noting that the Internet had transformed the information services of the United Nations, cautioned that this innovation could also be a source of hatred and intolerance. In addressing the issue of information, he said, care must be taken to ensure that the developments that made the widespread availability of the Internet possible were used to advance the ideals of humanity.

19. The issue of multilingualism in the work of the Organization was a major topic of debate for many delegations. One speaker, addressing the Committee on behalf of a large group, praised the Department for the progress achieved since the launch of the United Nations web site. However, he stressed the need for strict observance of multilingualism, which reflected the richness and diversity of the international community and strengthened the values of tolerance and mutual respect. The success of the web site could be further carried forward if the Department were able to develop a multilingual United Nations News Centre, another speaker commented. The introduction of the Arabic News Centre on the web site was welcomed by several speakers. One delegation, however, regretted that the implementation of the

Spanish-language News Centre had once again been delayed. Another delegation, taking a critical view, commented that the English-language web site of the Department needed improvement, particularly with respect to the timely delivery of information and news of interest to the public; the search function should be enhanced, and comments made by the Secretary-General on his visits outside the United Nations should be made promptly available. Some speakers supported the integration of the Official Document System with the United Nations web site, as it would enhance the multilingual nature of the web site by providing free, public access to all United Nations parliamentary documents in the six official languages of the United Nations. One speaker, while commending the Information Technology Services Division and the Department of Public Information for their continued development of the Official Document System, asked that the service be made freely and publicly available on the web site.

20. A majority of speakers stressed the importance of traditional means of communication, especially radio, for reaching out to audiences in developing countries. The pilot project on the development of international radio broadcasting for the United Nations was welcomed by several speakers as a very cost-effective way of spreading the United Nations message. They welcomed the results of a recent survey on the estimated worldwide audiences for United Nations Radio programmes. According to the survey, in any given week more than 133 million people around the world listen to United Nations Radio programmes in the six official languages of the Organization. One speaker recalled that over the years United Nations Radio had retained tremendous vitality and would continue to carry the voice of the United Nations all over the world. For the developing countries, that meant advantages that could not be replicated by any other means of communication. He noted that the weekly audience for Chinese-language programming of United Nations Radio had reached 26 million, which represented 20 per cent of the entire global audience of United Nations Radio. Another speaker, on behalf of a large group, applauded the efficiency and dedication of the staff in charge of radio broadcasting in Portuguese. As for the Caribbean, one speaker noted that approximately 1.5 million listeners of United Nations Radio came from that region. Advocating the continuation of this project, a position shared by many delegations, he urged that resources be devoted to this activity. Another speaker, also calling for the continuation of international broadcasting by United Nations Radio, noted that the Russian radio service allowed 1.5 million people to listen to United Nations news through Belarus radio station number 1.

21. One delegation, while commending United Nations Radio's current arrangements with the Voice of Nigeria, asked the Department to enter into a working relationship with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, which enjoyed wide coverage in that country. While calling for the pilot radio project to be made an integral part of the Department's activities, one delegation requested a more detailed proposed programme budget for the continuation of the radio-broadcasting project. One speaker, speaking on behalf of his own and another observer delegation, welcomed the pilot broadcasting project, which he characterized as cost-effective and innovative. Such innovative projects should be financed by redeploying resources from less effective or less proven activities, rather than by merely adding a new layer of activity, he argued.

22. The activities of the Outreach Division, aimed at firming up the Department's partnership with civil society, the academic community, the media and library

services, were noted with appreciation by several speakers. One delegation said that building such partnerships would be one way of promoting United Nations activities at the people's level. Another delegation, underlining that the role of the Department was not limited to disseminating information, but also to serving as a window on civil society, noted that the United Nations had greatly benefited from its partnership with civil society. Civil society groups should be relied upon not just as transmitters of information, but as elements influencing decision-making within the Organization. He referred to the role of disabled persons and asked the Department to produce materials in Braille for use by the blind. Another delegation, stressing the importance of informing the international community of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, thanked the Department for its continuing efforts in this regard. The annual training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries, which was implemented by the Outreach Division, was also cited by a number of delegations as an important outreach activity that should be continued and strengthened. Another delegation, referring to the needs of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan, which had been affected by nuclear tests, asked the Department to take appropriate measures to enhance world public awareness on this matter. She also asked the Committee to include this issue in a resolution to be adopted at the current session.

23. Another delegation, commenting on the work of the Outreach Division, found some duplication of functions in its work. Moreover, its outreach appeared to be confined to United Nations Headquarters, where there was already a wide range of channels available to facilitate the dissemination of information about the United Nations, he commented.

24. The *UN Chronicle*, considered a flagship publication of the Department and now an integral part of its outreach efforts vis-à-vis educational institutions, was described as a thought-provoking publication by one delegate. He argued that the publication should be allowed to continue serving the Member States and the larger global audience. Presenting an opposing view, another delegation suggested that resources used to produce the *Chronicle* would be better spent, for example, by enhancing the United Nations web site in the six official languages or translating United Nations materials into local languages.

25. Several speakers welcomed the Department's initiative to integrate libraries of the United Nations system, and in this context supported the setting up of the Steering Committee for the modernization and integrated management of the libraries. One delegation, welcoming the efforts to upgrade the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, asked it to take measures to strengthen the depository libraries around the world by providing them training and other assistance. Another delegation recommended that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library assume responsibility for setting policy and coordinating the work of all United Nations libraries. One delegation, taking an opposing view, hoped that the work of the Steering Committee would resolve the unrealistic proposals to transmit to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library the functions of libraries in other locations, including Geneva and Nairobi. Referring to new security measures imposed since September 2001, one delegation called for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to be reopened for use by members of the public. The newly created Steering Committee should find an adequate solution to the problem resulting from the implementation of extraordinary security measures, he noted. Another delegation, asking the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to increase the amount of information it contained, requested the Department to distribute detailed

information, including a list of information sources available at the library and specific e-mail addresses and symbols.

26. Several speakers commented on the steps being taken by the Department to make performance management an integral part of the Secretary-General's reform efforts, especially the introduction of an annual programme impact review to ensure the alignment of the Department's activities with its priorities. One delegation, representing a large group, noted that self-evaluation and performance management were essential to success; they should not be made contingent on resources from elsewhere being freed up, nor should they be optional for any programme manager. The same delegation also requested the Department to furnish more precise details concerning indicators of achievement and baselines from which to measure future success. Notions of "satisfaction" and "efficiency", which permeated the reports presented for consideration by Committee members, demanded a more thorough interpretation by the Department, he commented. Questioning the link between resource savings and evaluation, one observer described evaluation as a core responsibility that should not hinge on new resources becoming available for that purpose.

27. Strategic partnerships within the United Nations system developed through the newly created United Nations Communications Group were endorsed by several members of the Committee. One speaker commended the Department, especially its head, for recognizing the potential of the Group and for guiding United Nations system partners in developing joint communication strategies. Another delegation, describing the Group as a suitable vehicle for harmonizing the activities of the information community within the United Nations, underscored the need to speak with one distinct, recognizable voice. The Communications Group had the potential to fill this need, he observed.

28. At the end of the general debate, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information made a statement, in which he responded to a wide range of questions raised by delegations.

Chapter IV

Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

29. Five reports of the Secretary-General were introduced for consideration by members of the Committee, three by programme managers of the Department of Public Information, one by a representative of the Department of Management and one by a representative of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The report of the Secretary-General on the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications (A/AC.198/2003/2) was introduced by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information in his opening remarks and considered in the general debate, and therefore did not receive a separate review.

30. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/2003/3), a representative of the Department of Management told the Committee that the report took into account the changes introduced in the Department as part of the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General. A new

mission statement for the Department had been formulated, stating that its mission was to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact. In adhering to its renewed mandate, the Department would be guided by the priorities laid down by the General Assembly, with its core message drawn from the Millennium Declaration. In order to realize the mission, the Department had created a new operating model based on a clear conception of the Department's role, the elaboration of its functions in a manner that emphasized current communications challenges and the provision of the expected services to Member States. The Department, in its efforts to improve its ability to deliver effective and targeted information programmes, had put into effect a new operating model, which now comprised four subprogrammes: strategic communications services, news services, library services and outreach services. The Secretary-General's report included objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each subprogramme, in line with the new results-based budgeting. The Committee was told that the report presented to it would also be sent to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and eventually to the Fifth Committee.

31. In the interactive dialogue that followed, one delegation noted that the Department's core message, described in A/AC.198/2003/3, annex, paragraph 28.4, did not fully reflect the Millennium Declaration, as it made no reference to the need to promote the establishment of a global strategy of partnership for development. She also noted that the wording in the paragraph on the regionalization of information centres into hubs went beyond General Assembly resolution 57/300, in which the Assembly had confined itself to taking note of the Secretary-General's proposal. The delegation also asked the Department to be more precise on how the resources freed up from the regionalization of information centres would be used.

32. In response, the representative of the Department noted that paragraph 28.4 was a highly summarized reflection of the Department's overall mandate, and it was possible to make modifications concerning the Millennium Declaration. As for more precision on resource allocation, he noted that it was not precise at this stage because not all elements of the arrangements for the hub concept were in place. According to the report, a part of the resources made available through regionalization would be used for strengthening the multilingual capacity of the web site. The balance of the resources would remain in the information centre operation, he explained.

33. A representative of the Department introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries (A/AC.198/2003/5). The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, had requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth review of library activities at Headquarters and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, as well as at the regional commissions. As a result of that review, conducted in 2002, the Secretary-General had presented his proposals for the reform of United Nations libraries under three main ideas: that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library would assume responsibility for setting policy and coordinating the work of all United Nations libraries; that the Department of Public Information, in conjunction with the Department of Management, would prepare a comprehensive plan for the integration of library services at various locations through the use of information and communication technologies; and that the Department of Public Information would formulate and implement a plan to improve

electronic access to these services, facilitate the transfer of paper collections to electronic files and provide training to the depository librarians. As a first step, a Steering Committee on the modernization and integrated management of the libraries was created to develop and implement strategies for a more modern, efficient and accessible system of library services within the United Nations. The primary purpose of the Committee, which was chaired by the Department of Public Information and included the heads of each of the libraries in the system, was to foster innovative collaboration among United Nations libraries.

34. One delegation stated that while the Steering Committee was "a good first step", it did not go far enough. In his report, the Secretary-General had recommended that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library be the central manager in enforcing real change. The Steering Committee, on the other hand, was only a consultative body. Another delegation noted that the report contained no specific reference to the question of integration of library services. Given the orientation set out by the Secretary-General in his reform report, he wanted to know why the programmatic aspect of the budget with respect to library services had not set out the objective of integrating those services in a way that reflected what the Secretary-General had originally recommended.

35. A representative of the Department explained that the Steering Committee had been set up, only as a first approach, to devise a collaborative mechanism. As for the programmatic aspects of the budget, he noted, reference had been made so far in the 2004-2005 budget at the level of each of the libraries. In the budget request for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, for instance, there had been a more detailed request for a modest amount of funds in order to make that system work properly. The delegates concerned were told that a more comprehensive analysis of the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 would later be provided by the Department of Management. A representative of the Department also agreed to convey to the Secretary-General — and to the Deputy Secretary-General, who had originally proposed the creation of the Steering Committee — the concern expressed by one delegation regarding the leadership role of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

36. A representative of the Department presented the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the pilot project on the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations (A/AC.198/2003/4). The Department, in response to General Assembly resolution 56/64 B of 24 December 2001 regarding the implementation of the project, had commissioned a survey on the estimated worldwide audience for United Nations radio programmes in all six official languages, plus Portuguese. The survey, carried out with the active participation of 180 partner stations, revealed that more than 133 million people listen to United Nations Radio at least once a week. The representative of the Department noted that there was intense competition to have material broadcast. The fact that these broadcasters chose to use United Nations Radio broadcasts was a reflection of the fact that they perceived the reports to be impartial and objective.

37. Several delegations congratulated the Department on the success of United Nations Radio. One delegate asked whether resources for the Spanish radio section would be increased; another asked why a Portuguese radio programme was not considered "an official" programme in the report. In response, the representative of the Department said that resource allocations among various language units in United Nations Radio were not expected to change. As for the Portuguese

programme, he noted that Portuguese was not one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

38. Concerning the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Communications Group in 2002 (A/AC.198/2003/6), a representative of the Department noted that the Communications Group, which replaced the Joint United Nations Information Committee, was formed in January 2002, at the initiative of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, as a flexible and content-driven mechanism for inter-agency coordination in the field of public information and communications. Through the weekly meetings held at United Nations Headquarters and the annual meetings held at rotating locations, the Group provided a forum for broad discussion and policy formulation on both general and specific communications and public information issues. The overall objective of the Group, she noted, was to develop a cohesive and unified voice for the United Nations system. The Group had created a number of task forces on specific issues, including one on the World Summit on the Information Society (2003 and 2005) and another on the International Year of Freshwater 2003. Another joint endeavour for the Group, she noted, was the 2005 World Exposition in Aichi, Japan. With UNESCO as the lead agency, the Group members had decided to participate in a joint United Nations pavilion. Thus, by evolving into a flexible but task-oriented common information and communications platform, the Group had helped the United Nations system to coordinate its activities, avoid duplication and speak with one voice, she concluded.

39. The report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which included its review of the structure and operations of United Nations information centres, was presented by a representative of that Office. Prepared in response to General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 and 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the report summarized the results of a comprehensive audit of the information centres, highlighting the need for an urgent rethinking of the information centre concept in terms of its usefulness and continued relevance. Noting the discrepancy between centres located in developed and developing countries, the representative said that a significant portion of rent and office maintenance funds, which constituted some 40 per cent of non-staff operating costs, were expended on centres located in developed countries. The Department should therefore assess the need for centres in such countries and review their current number. The report also noted that only a third of the centres were submitting the monthly reports that constituted the principal tool for evaluating their performances. Until recently, no centre was required to prepare and submit annual work plans. The Department of Public Information needed to update the goals, strategies and objectives of the United Nations information centre operation as part of a comprehensive review, the report recommended. It should also carry out an in-depth evaluation of various options to address the issues raised in the report, including the restructuring of information centres on a regional basis and the integration of more centres with local United Nations Development Programme offices or with the lead United Nations agency in the host country or region.

40. Delegations, generally endorsing the concept of regional hubs, wanted to know how the hub approach would be implemented. One delegation wanted to know what the impact of regionalization would be for Portuguese-speaking countries, especially for those in Africa. Another delegation wanted to know if the interests of the French-speaking African countries would be taken into account when establishing

guidelines for a regional hub concept. One delegation wanted to know whether indicators regarding the impact of the work of the information centres and the level of voluntary contributions of host countries, civil society and the private sector had been taken into account.

41. In response, a representative of the Office of Internal Oversight Services noted that the main recommendation of her Office, which had been able to provide in-depth analysis of only five centres, was for the Department of Public Information to rethink the information centre concept. The regional hub concept was one option that stemmed from the rethinking. A representative of the Department of Public Information later noted that the Secretary-General had proposed that the restructuring process take place over three years. She further noted that her Department was currently trying to develop new criteria to assess the impact of the centres on the ground. Regarding the French-speaking countries, she noted that French was one of the six official languages of the United Nations and that information materials were available in that language. Besides, the special needs of the French-language countries, especially those in Africa, would be taken into account.



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Agenda item 11

Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee
to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session

Draft report

Chapter V

Preparation and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session

Draft resolution A

Information in the service of humanity

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the comprehensive and important report of the Committee on Information,¹

Also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information,

Urges all countries, organizations of the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned, reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media, deeply concerned by the disparities existing between developed and developing countries and the consequences of every kind arising from those disparities that affect the capability of the public, private or other media and individuals in developing countries to disseminate information and communicate their views and their cultural and ethical values through endogenous cultural production, as well as to ensure the diversity of sources and their free access to information, and recognizing the call in this context for what in the United Nations

¹ To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/58/21)*.



and at various international forums has been termed "a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process":

(a) To cooperate and interact with a view to reducing existing disparities in information flows at all levels by increasing assistance for the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with due regard for their needs and the priorities attached to such areas by those countries, and in order to enable them and the public, private or other media in developing countries to develop their own information and communication policies freely and independently and increase the participation of media and individuals in the communication process, and to ensure a free flow of information at all levels;

(b) To ensure for journalists the free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them;

(c) To provide support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists from public, private and other media in developing countries;

(d) To enhance regional efforts and cooperation among developing countries, as well as cooperation between developed and developing countries, to strengthen communication capacities and to improve the media infrastructure and communication technology in the developing countries, especially in the areas of training and dissemination of information;

(e) To aim at, in addition to bilateral cooperation, providing all possible support and assistance to the developing countries and their media, public, private or other, with due regard to their interests and needs in the field of information and to action already adopted within the United Nations system, including:

(i) The development of the human and technical resources that are indispensable for the improvement of information and communication systems in developing countries and support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes, such as those already operating under both public and private auspices throughout the developing world;

(ii) The creation of conditions that will enable developing countries and their media, public, private or other, to have, by using their national and regional resources, the communication technology suited to their national needs, as well as the necessary programme material, especially for radio and television broadcasting;

(iii) Assistance in establishing and promoting telecommunication links at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, especially among developing countries;

(iv) The facilitation, as appropriate, of access by the developing countries to advanced communication technology available on the open market;

(f) To provide full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication² of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which should support both public and private media.

Draft resolution B

United Nations public information policies and activities

The General Assembly,

Reiterating its decision to consolidate the role of the Committee on Information as its main subsidiary body mandated to make recommendations to it relating to the work of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat,

Concurring with the view of the Secretary-General that the fundamental premise underlying the reorientation efforts of the Department of Public Information remains General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, establishing the Department of Public Information, which states in paragraph 2 of annex I that "the activities of the Department should be so organized and directed as to promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world",

Concurring also with the view of the Secretary-General that the contents of public information and communications should be placed at the heart of the strategic management of the United Nations and that a culture of communications should permeate all levels of the Organization, as a means of fully informing the peoples of the world of the aims and activities of the United Nations, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in order to create broad-based global support for the United Nations,

Stressing that the primary mission of the Department of Public Information is to provide, through its outreach activities, accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely information to the public on the tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization with the greatest transparency,

Noting that the comprehensive review of the work of the Department of Public Information, requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, and the implementation of its first phase, described in the report of the Secretary-General on reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications to the Committee on Information at its twenty-fourth session,³ as well as the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change",⁴ and its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002, as they apply to the Department of Public Information, provide an opportunity to take further steps to rationalize the work of the Department in order to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness, and to maximize the use of its resources,

² See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Twenty-first Session, Belgrade, 23 September to 28 October 1980*, vol. 1, *Resolutions*, sect. III.4, resolution 4/21.

³ A/AC.198/2002/2.

⁴ A/57/387 and Corr.1.

Expressing its concern that the gap in the information and communication technologies between the developed and the developing countries has continued to widen and that vast segments of the population in developing countries are not benefiting from the present information and technology revolution, and, in this regard, underlining the necessity of rectifying the imbalances of the global information and technology revolution in order to make it more just, equitable and effective,

Recognizing that developments in the information and communication technology revolution open vast new opportunities for economic growth and social development and can play an important role in the eradication of poverty in developing countries, and, at the same time, emphasizing that it also poses challenges and risks and could lead to the further widening of disparities between and within countries,

Recalling its resolution 56/262 of 15 February 2002 on multilingualism, and emphasizing the importance of making appropriate use of the official languages of the United Nations in the activities of the Department of Public Information, aiming to eliminate the disparity between the use of English and the other five official languages,

Welcoming Saudi Arabia to membership in the Committee on Information,

I. Introduction

1. *Reaffirms* its resolution 13 (I), in which it established the Department of Public Information, and all other relevant General Assembly resolutions related to the activities of the Department;

2. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, in respect of the public information policies and activities of the United Nations, to continue to implement fully the recommendations contained in paragraph 2 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993 and other mandates as established by the General Assembly;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the medium-term plan for the period 2002–2005 as a guideline that sets out the overall orientation of the public information programme for the Organization's goals through effective communication;

4. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations remains the indispensable foundation of a peaceful and just world and that its voice must be heard in a clear and effective manner, and emphasizes the essential role of the Department of Public Information in this context;

5. *Welcomes* the proposals of the Secretary-General to improve the effective and targeted delivery of public information activities, including the restructuring of the Department of Public Information, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly;

6. *Reaffirms* the central role of the Committee on Information in United Nations public information policies and activities, including the restructuring process of the Department of Public Information, and the prioritization of its activities, and welcomes the continued constructive interaction between the Department of Public Information and the members of the Committee on Information;

7. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure, to the extent possible, that recommendations relating to the programme of the Department of Public Information originate and are considered in the Committee on Information;

8. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, following the priorities laid down by the General Assembly in the medium-term plan and using the United Nations Millennium Declaration as its guide, to pay particular attention to such major issues as the eradication of poverty, conflict prevention, sustainable development, human rights, the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic, combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and the needs of the African continent;

9. *Also requests* the Department of Public Information to pay attention to all major issues addressed in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals in carrying out its activities;

10. *Concurs* with the Secretary-General on the need to enhance the technological infrastructure of the Department of Public Information in order to widen its outreach and improve the United Nations web site;

11. *Recognizes* the important work carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its collaboration with news agencies and broadcasting organizations in developing countries in disseminating information on priority issues, and encourages a continued collaboration between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the promotion of culture and in the fields of education and communication;

II. General activities of the Department of Public Information

12. *Welcomes* the steps taken towards the restructuring of the Department of Public Information, as described in the report of the Secretary-General on the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications,⁵ and encourages the Secretary-General to continue the reorientation exercise and efforts to improve the Department's efficiency and productivity, including wide-ranging and possibly new innovative proposals, taking into account broad principles and directions contained in the present resolution, and to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session;

13. *Reaffirms* that the Department of Public Information is the focal point for information policies of the United Nations and the primary news centre for information about the United Nations, its activities and those of the Secretary-General, and encourages a closer integration of functions between the Department and those offices providing spokesman services for the Secretary-General;

14. *Welcomes* the progress achieved since the commencement of the reorientation exercise in enhancing the performance and effectiveness of the Department of Public Information in accordance with the mandates established by the General Assembly and the recommendations of the Committee on Information, also welcomes, in this regard, its decision to implement an annual programme impact review, making self-evaluation a part of the daily work of all programme managers with a view to institutionalizing performance management, and requests

⁵ A/AC.198/2003/2.

the Secretary-General to transmit the report on the Department's annual programme impact review to the Committee on Information at its successive sessions;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in the context of the reorientation process, to continue to exert all efforts to ensure that publications and other information services of the Secretariat, including the United Nations web site and the United Nations News Service, contain comprehensive, objective and equitable information about the issues before the Organization and that they maintain editorial independence, impartiality, accuracy and full consistency with resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly;

16. *Reiterates* that all printed materials of the Department of Public Information, in accordance with existing mandates, should not duplicate other publications of the United Nations system and should be produced in a cost-effective manner;

17. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Department of Public Information to reconstitute the Publications Board, in accordance with existing legislative mandates;

18. *Urges* the Department of Public Information to continue to exhibit transparency to the greatest extent possible, so as to increase awareness of the impact of its programmes and activities;

19. *Emphasizes* that, through its reorientation, the Department of Public Information should maintain and improve its activities in the areas of special interest to developing countries and, where appropriate, other countries with special needs, including countries in transition, and that such reorientation contributes to bridging the existing gap between the developing and the developed countries in the crucial field of public information and communications;

20. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to strengthen the coordination between the Department of Public Information and other departments of the Secretariat, including the designation of focal points to work with substantive departments to identify target audiences and develop information programmes and media strategies for priority issues, and emphasizes that public information capacities and activities in other departments should function under the guidance of the Department;

21. *Welcomes* the initiatives that have been taken by the Department of Public Information to strengthen the public information system of the United Nations, and, in this regard, stresses the importance of a coherent and results-oriented approach being taken by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the programmes and funds of the United Nations system involved in public information activities as well as the provision of resources for their implementation, and that feedback from Member States on the relevance and effectiveness of its programme delivery should be taken into account;

22. *Also welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Communications Group in 2002,⁶ commends the Department of Public Information on its active and constructive participation in the Group, in particular its efforts to promote inter-agency coordination in the field of public information, encourages the Department to continue to play a key role in the newly

⁶ A/AC.198/2003/6.

established United Nations Communications Group, takes note of the efforts being undertaken by the Group to develop further several key initiatives, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at successive sessions on the activities of the Group;

23. *Appreciates* the continued efforts of the Department of Public Information in issuing daily press releases, and requests the Department to continue providing this invaluable service to both Member States and representatives of the media, while considering possible means of improving their production process and streamlining their format, structure and length, keeping in mind the views of Member States and the fact that other departments may be providing similar or overlapping services in this regard;

24. *Acknowledges* the mission statement proposed in the report of the Secretary-General on the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications,⁷ which is intended to include all activities of the Department, and which reads as follows: "The Department of Public Information's mission is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact";

25. *Welcomes* the new operating model of the Department of Public Information as described in the report of the Secretary-General on the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications, which, inter alia, recognizes that content generation emanates from the other departments and offices of the Secretariat and organizations of the United Nations system, while content coordination and refinement as well as content presentation and distribution are the responsibility of the Department, working in close cooperation with the media, Member States and civil society partners;

26. *Requests* that during the deliberations on the item "Questions relating to information" in the Fourth Committee during the successive regular sessions of the General Assembly, an informal interaction between the Secretariat and members of the Fourth Committee should take place after the presentation by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information on the substance of that oral briefing, within existing resources;

Multilingualism and public information

27. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Department of Public Information to enhance multilingualism in its activities and encourages the Department to continue its endeavours in this regard;

28. *Emphasizes* the importance of ensuring the full, equitable treatment of all the official languages of the United Nations in all activities of the Department of Public Information, and stresses the importance of fully implementing its resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997, in section C of which it requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the texts of all new public documents in all six official languages, and information materials of the United Nations, are made available daily through the United Nations web site and are accessible to Member States without delay;

⁷ A/AC.198/2003/2, para. 11.

29. *Reaffirms* its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of Public Information has appropriate staffing capacity in all official languages of the United Nations to undertake all its activities;

30. *Reminds* the Secretary-General of the need to include in future programme budget proposals for the Department of Public Information the importance of using all six official languages in its activities;

Bridging the digital divide

31. *Recalls* its decision, endorsed in its resolution 56/183 of 21 December 2001, to convene the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in December 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, welcomes the Department of Public Information's initiatives undertaken for this Summit, encourages States, relevant United Nations bodies and entities, other intergovernmental institutions and civil society to continue to actively participate in this process, and reaffirms the importance of the active involvement and support of the Department of Public Information in raising global awareness of the Summit and its main objectives;

32. *Commends* the Secretary-General for the establishment of the United Nations Information Technology Service, the Health InterNetwork and the Information and Communications Technology Task Force with a view to bridging the digital divide and as a response to the continuing gulf between developed and developing countries, welcomes the contribution of the Department of Public Information in publicizing the efforts of the Secretary-General to close the digital divide as a means of spurring economic growth and as a response to the continuing gulf between developed and developing countries, and, in this context, requests the Department to further enhance its role;

III. New programmatic priorities for the Department of Public Information

33. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for the Department of Public Information,^{*} and welcomes the new subprogramme structure that includes: strategic communications services, news services, library services and outreach services;

34. *Acknowledges* that the Department of Public Information, with the assistance of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, is currently in the process of formulating methodologies and conducting a systematic evaluation of the impact, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Department's activities over a three-year period, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/300, and requests the Secretary-General to report on the progress made at the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Information;

35. *Reaffirms* that the Department of Public Information must prioritize its work programme while respecting existing mandates and in line with rule 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, to focus its message and concentrate its efforts better and, as a function of performance

^{*} A/AC.198/2003/3.

management, to match its programmes with the needs of its target audiences, on the basis of improved feedback and evaluation mechanisms;

36. *Underlines* the need for the proposed indicators of achievement and expected accomplishments, which for the first time form part of the programme budget, to be clearly defined, measurable and able to contribute to a meaningful evaluation of activities;

United Nations information centres

37. *Stresses* that the United Nations information centres and information components or regional hubs, as applicable, should play a significant role in disseminating information about the work of the Organization to the peoples of the world, including in the areas outlined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and emphasizes that the information centres, or regional hubs, as applicable, as the "field voice" of the Department of Public Information, should promote public awareness of and mobilize support for the work of the United Nations at the local level, bearing in mind that information in the local languages has the strongest impact on the local populations;

38. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of the structure and operations of United Nations information centres,⁹ and requests the Secretary-General to submit further detailed information to the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Information;

39. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Department of Public Information to review the allocation of both staff and financial resources to United Nations information centres with a view to possibly transferring resources from information centres in developed countries to United Nations information activities in developing countries, emphasizing the needs of the least developed countries, and to any other activities of high priority, such as multilingualism on the web site and evaluation of services, in consultation with concerned Member States;

40. *Reaffirms* paragraph 15 of its resolution 57/300, in which it took note of the proposal of the Secretary-General contained in action eight of his report,⁴ to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, where appropriate, in consultation with concerned Member States, starting with the creation of a Western European hub, followed by a similar approach in other high-cost developed countries, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the proposal with the objective of applying this initiative in other regions, in consultation with Member States, where this initiative will strengthen the flow and exchange of information in developing countries;

41. *Encourages* the efforts by some United Nations information centres to develop their own web pages in local languages, also encourages the Department of Public Information to provide resources and technical facilities, in particular to those information centres whose web pages are not yet operational and to develop web pages in the respective local languages of their host countries, and further encourages host countries to respond to the needs of the information centres;

⁹ A/57/747.

42. *Recalls* the appeal made by the Secretary-General to the host countries of United Nations information centres to facilitate the work of the centres in their countries by providing rent-free or rent-subsidized premises, while taking into account the economic condition of the host countries and bearing in mind that such support should not be a substitute for the full allocation of financial resources for the information centres in the context of the programme budget of the United Nations;

43. *Notes* the continuing support of the Department of Public Information in the consolidation of the United Nations field presence in a single United Nations house, and requests the Secretary-General to report in detail on the progress made at the Committee's twenty-sixth session;

IV. Strategic communications services

44. *Acknowledges* that the strategic communications services, to be implemented by the newly created Strategic Communications Division, will be responsible for devising and disseminating United Nations messages by developing communications strategies, in close collaboration with the substantive departments, United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, in full compliance with the legislative mandates;

Promotional campaigns

45. *Recognizes* that promotional campaigns aimed at supporting special sessions and international conferences of the United Nations are part of the core responsibility of the Department of Public Information, and welcomes the efforts of the Department to examine creative ways in which it can organize and implement these campaigns in partnership with the substantive departments concerned, using the United Nations Millennium Declaration as its guide;

46. *Supports* the efforts of the Department of Public Information, while ensuring respect for the priorities established by the General Assembly, to also focus its promotional campaigns on the major issues identified by the Secretary-General;

47. *Appreciates* the work of the Department of Public Information in promoting, through its campaigns, issues of importance to the international community, such as sustainable development, children, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and decolonization, as well as the dialogue among civilizations, culture of peace and tolerance and the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and encourages the Department, in cooperation with the countries concerned and with the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, to continue to take appropriate measures to enhance world public awareness of these and other important global issues;

48. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information to continue to work within the United Nations Communications Group to coordinate the implementation of communication strategies with the heads of information of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system;

49. *Stresses* the need for the renewed emphasis in support of Africa's development, in particular by the Department of Public Information, in order to promote awareness in the international community of the nature of the critical

economic and social situation in Africa and of the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

Role of Department of Public Information in United Nations peacekeeping

50. *Commends* the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the public information capacity of the Department of Public Information for the establishment and functioning of the information components of peacekeeping operations and of political and peace-building missions of the United Nations, including its promotional efforts and other information support activities, and requests the Secretariat to continue to ensure the involvement of the Department from the planning stage of future operations through interdepartmental consultations and coordination with other departments of the Secretariat, in particular with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations;

51. *Stresses* the importance of enhancing the public information capacity of the Department of Public Information in the field of peacekeeping operations and its role in the selection process of spokespersons for United Nations peacekeeping operations or missions, and, in this regard, encourages the Department to second spokespersons who have the necessary skills to fulfil the tasks of the operations or missions, taking into account the equitable geographical distribution in accordance with Chapter XV, Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, and to consider views expressed, especially by host countries, when appropriate, in this regard;

52. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on Information on the role of the Department of Public Information in United Nations peacekeeping at its successive sessions;

53. *Welcomes* the transfer of the functions of the Cartographic Section from the Department of Public Information to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, since the Section's outputs are more closely aligned to the needs and activities of that Department;

V. News services

54. *Stresses* that the central objective of the news services, implemented by the News and Media Division, is the timely delivery of accurate, objective and balanced news and information emanating from the United Nations system in all four mass media — print, radio, television and Internet — to the media and other audiences worldwide with the overall emphasis on multilingualism;

Traditional means of communication

55. *Stresses* that radio remains one of the most cost-effective and far-reaching traditional media available to the Department of Public Information and an important instrument in United Nations activities, including development and peacekeeping, with a view to achieving a broad client base around the world;

56. *Notes with satisfaction* the success of the pilot project on the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations, and endorses the Secretary-General's proposal that the pilot project be made an integral part of the Department's activities;

57. *Requests* the Secretary-General to pay full attention to the parity of the six official languages in expanding the international radio broadcasting capacity;

58. *Notes* the efforts being made by the Department of Public Information to disseminate programmes directly to broadcasting stations all over the world in the six official languages, with the addition of Portuguese as well as, where possible, in other languages, and, in this regard, stresses the need for impartiality and objectivity concerning information activities of the United Nations;

59. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information to continue building partnerships with local, national and regional broadcasters to extend the United Nations message to all the corners of the world;

60. *Emphasizes* that United Nations Radio and Television should take full advantage of the technological infrastructure made available in recent years, including satellite platforms, information and communication technologies and the Internet, and requests the Secretary-General, as a part of the reorientation of the Department of Public Information, to consider a global strategy for broadcasting, taking into account existing technologies;

United Nations web site

61. *Reiterates its appreciation* for the efforts of the Department of Public Information in creating a high-quality, user-friendly and cost-effective web site, noting that this is especially noteworthy considering the scope of the undertaking, the budget constraints within the United Nations and the remarkably rapid expansion of the World Wide Web, reaffirms that the web site remains a very useful tool for media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, Member States and the general public, and welcomes the creation of the United Nations web site on terrorism;

62. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information to continue to take the necessary measures in order to ensure accessibility to the United Nations web site by persons with disabilities, including visual and hearing disabilities, and asks the Department to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session on its efforts in this regard;

63. *Notes with concern* that the multilingual development and enrichment of the United Nations web site has been slower than expected, among other factors, because of a lack of resources, and that content-providing offices have not, in general, been making their materials available on the United Nations web site in all six official languages;

64. *Stresses* the need to adopt a decision on the multilingual development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations web site, considering, inter alia, the possibility of organizational restructuring towards separate language units for each of the six official languages within the Department of Public Information, in order to achieve full parity among the official languages of the United Nations;

65. *Reaffirms* its request to the Secretary-General to ensure, until such a decision has been taken and implemented, to the extent possible and while maintaining an up-to-date and accurate web site, the equitable distribution of financial and human resources within the Department of Public Information allocated to the United Nations web site among all official languages on a

continuous basis, and to make every possible effort to ensure also that all materials contained on the web site that do not change and do not need regular maintenance are made available in all six official languages;

66. *Reaffirms* the need to achieve full parity among the six official languages on the United Nations web site, and, in this regard, takes note of the proposal of the Secretary-General, as contained in paragraph 33 of his report on the continued development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations web site in the six official languages,¹⁰ to translate all English materials and databases posted on the United Nations web site by the respective content-providing offices of the Secretariat into all official languages, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session on the most practical, efficient and cost-effective means of implementing this proposal;

67. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session proposals relating to the designation of a date by which all supporting arrangements would be in place for the implementation of this concept, after which date parity would continue, as well as proposals relating to the exemption from translation of specific items on the web site;

68. *Stresses* the importance of access for the public to the United Nations treaty collection and United Nations parliamentary documentation;

69. *Encourages* the Secretary-General, through the Department of Public Information, to continue to take full advantage of recent developments in information technology, including the Internet, in order to improve, in a cost-effective manner, the expeditious dissemination of information on the United Nations, in accordance with the priorities established by the General Assembly and taking into account the linguistic diversity of the Organization;

70. *Welcomes* the establishment of the United Nations News Centre in Arabic, and looks forward to the implementation of the United Nations News Centre in the remaining official languages by the end of 2003, with a view to achieving language parity on the web site;

71. *Welcomes* the proposal of the Secretary-General to provide free, public access to the Official Document System of the United Nations through a linkage with the Organization's web site for consideration in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session in this regard;

72. *Commends* the Information Technology Services Division of the Office of Central Support Services of the Secretariat on its efforts to ensure that the required technological infrastructure is in place to accommodate the imminent linkage of the Official Document System to the United Nations web site, and also commends the Department of Public Information for addressing issues of content management relating to that System;

73. *Notes* that the integration of the Official Document System with the United Nations web site will significantly enhance the multilingual nature of the site and will lead to efficiencies throughout all Secretariat departments through the elimination of duplicate formatting and duplicate posting of documents on the site;

¹⁰ A/AC.198/2002/6.

74. *Welcomes* the electronic mail-based United Nations News Service, distributed worldwide through e-mail by the Department of Public Information, and requests the Department to provide this service in all official languages, ensuring that news-breaking stories and news alerts are accurate, impartial and free of bias;

75. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the efforts of the High-Level Committee on Management to establish a United Nations portal, an inter-agency search facility encompassing the public web sites of all United Nations system organizations, a description of which is contained in annex II to the Secretary-General's report on the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications;⁵

76. *Calls upon* the Department to encourage all United Nations system entities to participate in the United Nations system search pilot project, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session on the activities of the High-Level Committee on Management in this regard;

VI. Library services

77. *Notes* that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is part of the Outreach Division of the Department of Public Information, notes also the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to make the Library a virtual library with world outreach, reiterates the need to maintain the provision of hard copies to Member States, subject to the relevant provisions of its resolution 56/242 of 24 December 2001, and notes further the efforts of the Secretary-General to enrich, on a multilingual basis, the stock of books and journals in the Library, including publications on peace and security and development-related issues, in order to ensure that the Library continues to be a broadly accessible resource for information about the United Nations and its activities;

78. *Welcomes* the creation of the Steering Committee on the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries, which is to develop and implement a strategy to achieve a more modern, efficient and accessible system within the United Nations, requests the Secretary-General, in guiding the work of the Steering Committee, to take into account the specificity and comparative advantage of each member library while ensuring an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach on United Nations libraries management and policy, and also requests the Secretary-General to report on the work of the Steering Committee to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session;

79. *Recognizes* the importance of the depository libraries in disseminating information and knowledge about United Nations activities, and, in this connection, urges the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in its capacity as the focal point, to take necessary initiatives to strengthen such libraries by providing regional training and other assistance;

80. *Notes* the holding of training courses, conducted by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library for the representatives of Member States and Secretariat staff on the use of Cyberseek, web search, the Intranet, United Nations documentation, United Nations Info Quest and the Official Document System of the United Nations;

81. *Recalls* paragraph 44 of its resolution 56/64 B of 24 December 2001, in which it welcomed the role of the Department of Public Information in fostering

increased collaboration among libraries of the United Nations system, particularly in establishing one central system-wide online catalogue that will allow for the searching of the bibliographic records of all print holdings of all United Nations system libraries, commends the United Nations International Computing Centre for developing the United Nations System Shared Cataloguing and Public Access System, which provides a single point of access to library catalogs, indexes and abstract databases, library holdings, links to full-text resources, and archives; also commends the Department for its role in the development of the United Nations Shared Cataloguing and Public Access System, requests the Department to encourage all United Nations system organizations to participate in the system; and also requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session in this regard;

82. *Looks forward* to the in-depth review of the library activities requested in paragraph 34 of its resolution 56/253, and requests that such a review be presented as soon as possible, and no later than at the main part of its fifty-eighth session;

83. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries,¹¹ and looks forward to further information and proposals as requested in paragraph 14 of its resolution 57/300, to be submitted to the relevant United Nations bodies, including the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session;

VII. Outreach services

84. *Acknowledges* that the outreach services, which are to be implemented by the Outreach Division of the Department of Public Information, will work towards promoting awareness of the role and work of the United Nations on priority issues;

85. *Notes* the importance of the continued implementation by the Department of Public Information of the ongoing programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries and countries in transition, as mandated by the General Assembly, and encourages the Department to consider how best to maximize the benefits derived from the programme by reviewing, inter alia, its duration and the number of its participants;

86. *Recognizes* the need for the Department of Public Information to increase its outreach services in all regions, and reiterates the need to include, in the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications, an analysis of the present reach and scope of the Department's activities, identifying the widest possible spectrum of audiences and geographical areas that are not covered adequately and that may require special attention, including the appropriate means of communication and bearing in mind local language requirements;

87. *Congratulates* the United Nations Correspondents Association for its Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Scholarship Fund, which sponsors journalists from developing countries to come to the United Nations Headquarters and report on the activities during the General Assembly, and urges donors to extend financial support to the Fund so that it may increase the number of such scholarships to journalists in this context;

¹¹ A/AC.198/2003/5.

VIII. Final remarks

88. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-sixth session and to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present resolution;

89. *Requests* the Committee on Information to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

90. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session the item entitled "Questions relating to information".
